

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUWAIT 01810 081055Z

12

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01

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IGA-02 TRSE-00 MC-02 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /145 W

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R 081019Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9519

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 1810

FROM QUINLAN MUSCAT

BEIRUT FOR COMMATT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MU MASS PFOR

SUBJECT: OMAN: AIRCRAFT SALES PROSPECTS

1. APPARENTLY FIRM ORDER FOR DC-9 AS SULTAN QABOOS PERSONAL AIRCRAFT (PLUS PROBABLY TWO MORE DC-9 TRANSPORTS FOR MILITARY) NOW CANCELLED, ACCORDING DEPUTY MINDEFENSE SAYYID FAHAR, WHO SAID SULTAN QABOOS SENT MESSAGE FROM ROME EARLY APRIL ABOUT ONE WEEK AFTER HE BEGAN HIS LEAVE IN ITALY; ORDERED NEGOTIATIONS STOPPED WITH DOUGLAS AND PLACED ORDER FOR SECOND-HAND VC-10 AS PERSONAL AIRCRAFT AND TWO BAC-111S FOR MILITARY. NEITHER FAHAR NOR ACTING DEFENSE ADMINISTRATION DIRECTOR SMITH, SEEN SEPARATELY, HAD ADVANCE NOTICE OR EXPLANATION FOR SUDDEN SWITCH, ALTHOUGH FAHAR SAID BRITISH AIRCRAFT PURCHASE WOULD SAVE OMAN ALMOST NINE MILLION DOLLARS. HOWEVER, SMITH SAID HE UNDERSTOOD OMAN IS ORDERING THREE BAC-111S INSTEAD OF TWO. WHEN ASKED HOW TO EXPLAIN SWITCH, CONSIDERING WHO SPONSORED DOUBLAS SALE (GHASSAN SHAKIR), SAYYID FAHAR ONLY CHUCKLED AND ROLLED EYES HEAVENWARD.

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PAGE 02 KUWAIT 01810 081055Z

2. STILL ANOTHER SOURCE, REGIONAL BOEING REP, CLAIMS VC-10 SALE

IS NOT FINAL.

3. BRITISH AMBASSADOR HAWLEY TOLD ME HE NATURALLY PLEASED AND WOULD LIKE TAKE CREDIT BUT IN FACT WAS EQUALLY SURPRISED BECAUSE HE HAD THOUGHT HE FAILED IN ATTEMPT PERSUADE SULTAN QABOOS SWITCH FROM DOUGLAS TO BRITISH AIRCRAFT. HE BELIEVED HIS ARGUMENTATION (I.E. BRITISH LIVES HAD BEEN GIVEN FOR OMAN AND NOW NEW LABOR GOVERNMENT VIEWS OF BRITISH INVOLVEMENT SHOULD BE RECKONED IN ANY SWITCH AWAY FROM BRITISH PROCUREMENT) MAY HAVE BEEN DELAYED FACTOR IN SULTAN'S DECISION. ALSO HE NOTED THAT VC-10 AND BAC-111S CHEAPER AND LATTER BETTER ADAPTED TO GRAVEL AIRSTRIPS. HOWEVER, HE ADMITTED STRONG DOUBT THAT SULTAN WOULD HAVE SWITCHED AWAY FROM GHASSAN SHAKIR'S RECOMMENDATION FOR DOUGLAS UNLESS SHAKIR HAD GOOD PIECE OF THE ACTION ON THE BRITISH AIRCRAFT SALES.

4. WE HAVE NO EXPLANATION OF DOUGLAS LOSS EXCEPT THAT QABOOS GIVETH AND QABOOS TAKETH AWAY AND WE'LL BET THAT GHASSAN SHAKIR AND PARTNER YAHYA OMAR IN ROME ARE STILL GETTING FAT PERCENTAGE ON THE NEW DEAL. DOUGLAS MIGHT ALSO BE ADVISED THAT GHASSAN SHAKIR NOW REPRESENTS TWO COMPETING BRITISH CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES IN OMAN. HE WHO SUPS WITH SHAKIR AND GANG SHOULD MAKE SURE SHAKIR USES ONLY ONE SPOON.
STOLTZFUS

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